NASA Facts

National Aeronautics and
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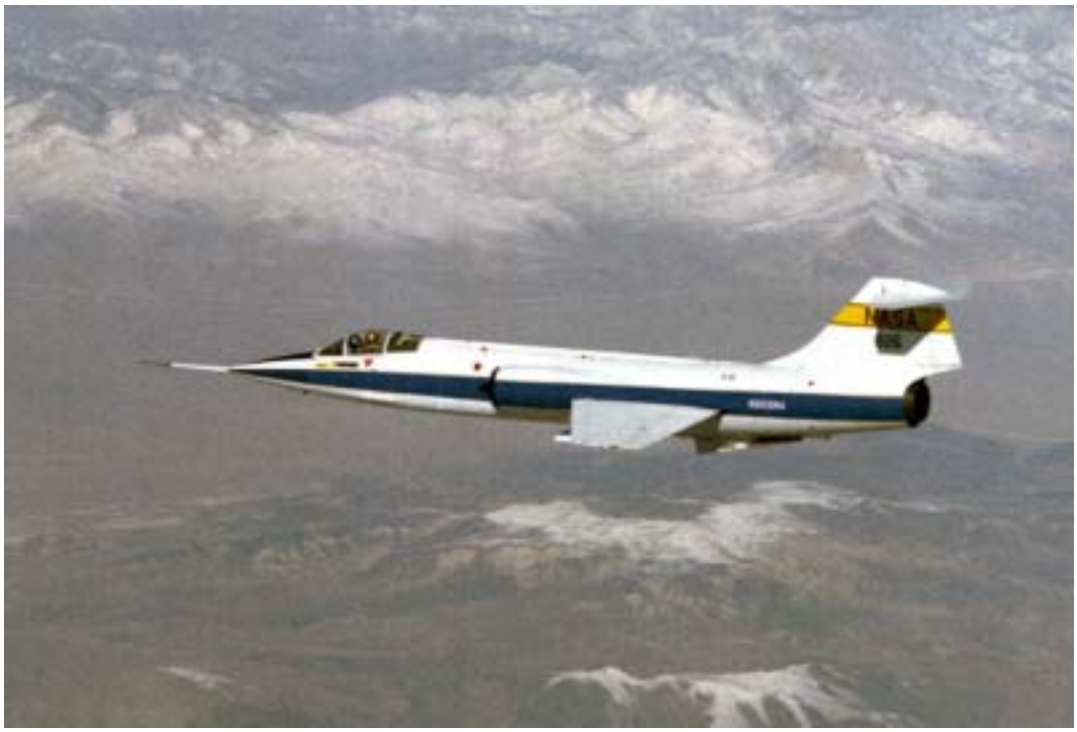
F-104 '826'



Project Background

F-104, tail number 826, was flown by NASA at the Dryden Flight Research Center, Edwards, Calif., as an aeronautical experiments testbed.

The aircraft was distinguished by a pylon called a flight test fixture (FTF) mounted on the fuselage centerline between the main landing gear.

Articles to be tested were attached to or installed in the FTF, which was instrumented to record the research data aboard the aircraft. The instrumentation package also transmitted the same data in "real time" to engineers in Dryden's mission control room as test events took place.

The FTF was an excellent device on which experiments were placed that required in-flight temperature, pressure and air flow velocity variations.

NASA 826 has been used in a wide variety of research programs, including testing of the heat-resistant Space Shuttle tiles. Affiixed to the FTF, the tiles were flown through rain to study how moisture would affect them. The tiles were also flown on the fixture in a position similar to the environment on the orbiter to determine if the bonding used to secure the tiles was sufficient.

NASA 826 was one of 11 F-104 aircraft that were flown by NASA at Dryden between 1956 and 1994. It is on static display at Dryden.